

The Relationship between Teachers' Trust in Students and Classroom Discipline Beliefs

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Abstract

This study was aimed to identify the relationship between teachers' trust in students and their classroom discipline beliefs. Correlational research design was used in this study. Participants of the study were 255 teachers who worked in Kocaeli, a city from the Marmara region of Turkey. Data were gathered with trust instrument which was developed by Mayer and Davis (1999), and beliefs about discipline inventory which was developed by Glickman and Tamashiro (cited in Wolfgang & Glickman, 1986). The relationship between teachers' trust in students and their beliefs about classroom discipline were tested using correlation technique. Results indicated that there was a moderate, negative relationship between teachers' trust in students and their scores of rules and consequences model; there was a low, positive relationship between teachers' trust in towards students and their scores of relationship-listening model; and there was a low, positive relationship between teachers' trust in students and their scores of confronting-contracting model.

Keywords: classroom management, trust, classroom discipline models, control

1. Introduction

There are lots of students whose concerns, abilities, backgrounds, cultural experiences, and characteristics are different from each other, and who are unique individuals in the classrooms all over the world. Teachers prefer various classroom management strategies and different discipline models to construct effective learning experiences for these students. Some of the discipline models preferred by teachers bring teachers' power and control to forefront. On the other hand, teachers use less power and control in some discipline models.

Individuals tend to use more power towards untrusted people and tend to control them more in some situations. For instance, when teachers distrust their students, they control them more (Oosthuizen et al., 2003). However, individuals tend to use less power towards trusted people and tend to control them less (Das & Teng, 2001; Klein-Woolthuis, Hillebrand, & Nooteboom, 2005; Vosselman & Meer-Kooistra, 2009; Neveu, 2004). In other words, trustee's behaviors are not controlled or are controlled less by trustor (Das & Teng, 2001; Inkpen & Currall, 2004; Vlaar, Van den Bosch & Volberda, 2007). On the other hand, according to the discipline models conceptualized by Wolfgang (1999, 2001), teachers' trust in students and their control levels are different from each other. For instance, teachers who prefer rules and consequences discipline model trust their students less, and control them more compared to teachers who prefer confronting-contracting and relationship-listening discipline models. Thus, this study was aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers' trust in students and their classroom discipline model preferences.

1.1 Trust

Trust is defined as emotion of belief and commitment without fear, hesitation, and doubt (TDK, 2014). Interpersonal trust consists of the emotion of trust which is towards any individual (Deluga, 1995). Trust in individual expresses expectations about individuals' not being damaged in their relationships with other individuals, and also they benefit from their relationships (Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis & Winograd, 2000). Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) defines trust as one-side's being helpful, trustworthy, competent, honest and open and the others' being willing to be vulnerable. As seen in the definition, there are six dimensions as benevolence, reliability, ability, honesty, openness, and vulnerability to risk in the concept of trust (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran, 2003). On the other hand,

Mayer and Davis (1999) conceptualized trust with the dimensions of ability, benevolence, and integrity. In this study, trust has been examined using Mayer and Davis' (1999) conceptualization about trust.

1.1.1 Ability

This dimension is entitled with different nouns as ability, competence, and specialty in different publications. Ability is the sum of competencies, skills, and characteristics that allow a party to have influence within some domain (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). According to Mishra (1996), the abilities of superior or subordinate have influence when building trust based on superior-subordinate relationship more. If any individual has not the ability to realize the expectations about her/him, s/he cannot be trusted even so s/he is gracious (Baier, 1986; Shaw, 1997; Goddard et al., 2001; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Principals, teachers, and students are dependent on each other to achieve educational aims in the schools. A student can believe that her/his teacher is benevolent and wants to teach the courses to him/her, but if the teacher has lack of knowledge about the courses or cannot transfer the knowledge sufficiently, students' trust in teacher can be limited (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). As similar, teachers can also trust the students who are benevolent but have lack of knowledge less.

1.1.2 Benevolence

Benevolence is related to the belief which is about trustee's willingness to help trustor voluntarily (Mayer et al., 1995). If we consider this from an organizational perspective, this could mean that when an employee has a feeling that his employer cares about his needs, he will see the employer as a benevolent person. In the cases of interdependence, belief about others' benevolence is quite important. Teachers that mistrust their students often make plans for expected or imagined wrong student behaviour. Benevolence and mutual intention are quite important for interpersonal relationships. Also they are important for trust climate between teachers and students (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). In this sense, it can be suggested that teachers trust the students whom they think as being benevolent more when compared to their trust levels towards students whom they think as not being benevolent.

1.1.3 Integrity

When a trustor thinks that the trustee sticks to the acceptable principles, this is called as integrity. Integrity includes both an employer's supporting the values which are seen as positive by employees, and an employer's behaving consistently with these supported values (Mayer et al., 1995). Both the teachers' trusting her/his students when they obey the classroom rules on which they have agreed together, and the teachers' earning students' trust by behaving consistent with these rules can be considered within integrity.

The trust components of which are listed above can be handled as an important element for human affairs, organizations, and teacher-student communication. Teachers' trust in students and foundations of trust may affect teachers' discipline beliefs for classroom management.

1.2 Discipline

In educational sciences, discipline means bringing out expected behaviours for students and eliminating or minimizing undesired behaviours (Aydın, 1998). The goals of educational discipline are to provide a safe learning environment, and to minimize or remove unsafe components to provide security (Eisenbraun, 2007). Thus, discipline is an essential component in educational environments (Govender & Sookrajh, 2014).

It is possible to list numerous discipline models for classroom management. These models are Berne's Social Development Model, Canter's Assertive Discipline Model, Dreikurs and Nelson's Social Discipline Model, Ginot Model, Glasser's Control Theory, Redl and Wattenberg Model, Skinner Model of Discipline, Thomas Gordon Model (Celep, 2000; Erdoğan, 2002; Sarıtaş, 2000; Tertemiz, 2000). Teachers prefer one or more of these discipline models for their classroom management activities. On the other hand, this study focuses on Wolfgang's (1999, 2001) model and discipline beliefs are examined in the context of this model, because discipline models conceptualized by him differ in terms of teachers' trust in students and their control levels. Wolfgang (1999, 2001) suggests three types of discipline models for classroom management. Figure 1 represents how much these discipline models use power and control.

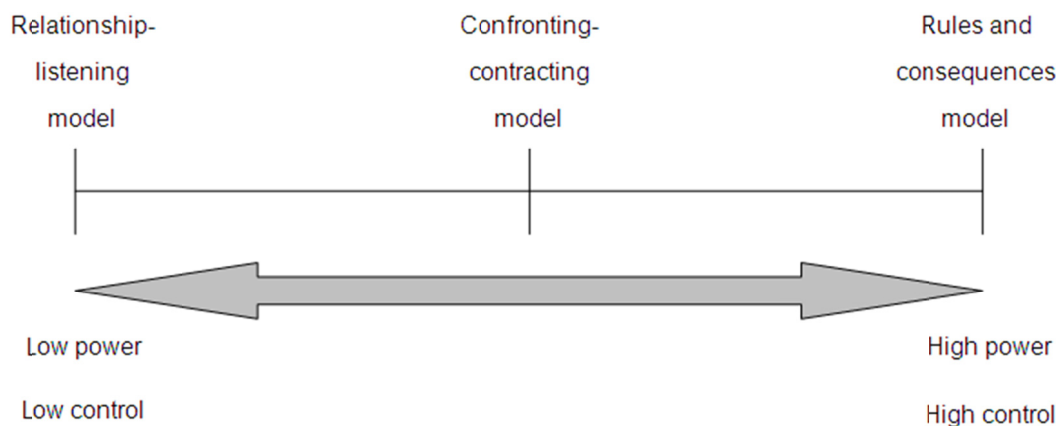


Figure 1. Classroom discipline models in terms of using power and control (adapted from Wolfgang 1999, 2001)

1.2.1 Relationship-Listening Model

Relationship-listening model based on humanistic theory proposes that students' behaviours are constructed with intrinsic motivation and if students want, they can change their behaviours. According to this model, teachers use less power and control, and they usually warn students via mimics and indirect statements. Teachers explain to students how negative behaviours affect teaching process and state their optimism about correcting negative behaviours. In relationship-listening model, solution of the problems between teachers and students is based on warmth, empathy, and dialog (Wolfgang, 1999, 2001). This process of dialogue maintains positive discipline in classrooms (Preez & Roux, 2010).

Classroom discipline models are different from each other in terms of using power and control by teachers for classroom discipline. For instance, teachers who adopt rules and consequences model tend to use more power and control towards students; on the other hand, teachers who adopt relationship-listening model tend to use less power and control towards students. As mentioned above, individuals tend to use less power and control towards trusted people. However, they tend to use more power and control towards untrusted people (Das & Teng, 2001; Klein-Woolthuis et al., 2005; Neveu, 2004). Thus, it can be suggested that there is a relationship between teachers' classroom discipline model preferences and their trust in students. For instance, when the trust level between educators and learners decrease, educators tend to use more power (Oosthuizen et al., 2003).

1.2.2 Confronting-Contracting Model

Confronting-contracting model based on social learning theory defends that interaction of intrinsic and extrinsic factors develop children. More power and control are used in this model than relationship-listening model. According to this model, problems about students must be solved through investigations, negotiations, and agreements. Teacher confronts student with her/his negative behaviour, and leads the student to critical thinking. As a result of this confronting, a verbal contract about the correction of future behaviours is usually provided between teacher and student (Wolfgang, 1999, 2001).

1.2.3 Rules and Consequences Model

Rules and consequences model based on behavioural theory proposes that students' behaviours are constructed and changed with extrinsic motivation. According to this model, problems are solved through powerful techniques such as direct warnings, exemplifying, and punishing. Rules and consequences model defends that control of classroom is teachers' primary role and rules and consequences are determined by the teacher. Students that obey classroom rules are awarded, and students' negative behaviours are punished by the teacher (Wolfgang, 1999, 2001).

It can be argued that teachers who trust their students prefer classroom discipline models within the concept of which they use power and control at a minimum level, and teachers who trust their students less prefer classroom discipline models that bring power and control to forefront. None of the studies investigated the relationship between teachers' trust in their students and their classroom discipline model preferences. Thus, the relationship between teachers' trust in their students and their classroom discipline beliefs were examined and two research questions were framed in this research: (1) What are the teachers' discipline model preferences and their trust levels towards students? (2) Is there any relationship between teachers' trust in students and their classroom

discipline model preferences?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 255 teachers who worked at lower secondary schools in Kocaeli, which is a city in Marmara region of Turkey, in 2013-2014 academic year. 153 of the participants were female and 102 of the participants were male. Participants' teaching experiences range between one and 37 years. Two of the participants had associate's degree (two more years of education after high school), 237 of them had bachelor's degree, and 16 of them had master's degree.

2.2 Data Collection

While gathering data, trust instrument developed by Mayer and Davis (1999), and beliefs about discipline inventory developed by Glickman and Tamashiro (cited by Wolfgang and Glickman 1986) were used. Data were collected during an in-service training organized by Ministry of National Education in Kocaeli for lower secondary school teachers.

2.2.1 Trust Scale

The original form of trust instrument has 17 items with five likert-type (1: disagree strongly, 5: agree strongly) (Mayer & Davis, 1999). Aksu, Polat and Aksu (2014) adapted the Turkish version of the instrument to the school administrators. For this study, the instrument adapted for teachers and the validity and reliability of the instrument retested. One item (item 15) was deleted according to reliability analysis results. Then, there were six items in ability subscale, five items in benevolence subscale, and five items in integrity subscale. Totally, there were three dimensions and 16 items in the instrument. Cronbach's Alpha value was found as 0.90 for the entire scale, 0.86 for ability subscale, 0.81 for the benevolence subscale, and 0.82 for integrity subscale. Having Cronbach's Alpha value over 0.70 was accepted reliable (Büyüköztürk, 2015). After reliability analysis, to test construct validity of the instrument, confirmatory factor analysis was made using Lisrel 8.7. According to analysis results goodness of fit indexes were found as follows: $\chi^2/df= 2.52$ ($p= 0.001$); NFI= 0.95; NNFI= 0.96; CFI= 0.97; RMR=0.045; RMSEA= 0.078. In terms of consideration of CFA indexes, having χ^2/df value under three indicates perfect compatibility (Kline, 2005; Sümer, 2000), having CFI, NFI, and NNFI values over 0.90 (Sümer, 2000; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), and having RMR value under 0.08 (Brown, 2006) and also having RMSEA value under 0.08 are accepted as the indicator of good compatibility (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993).

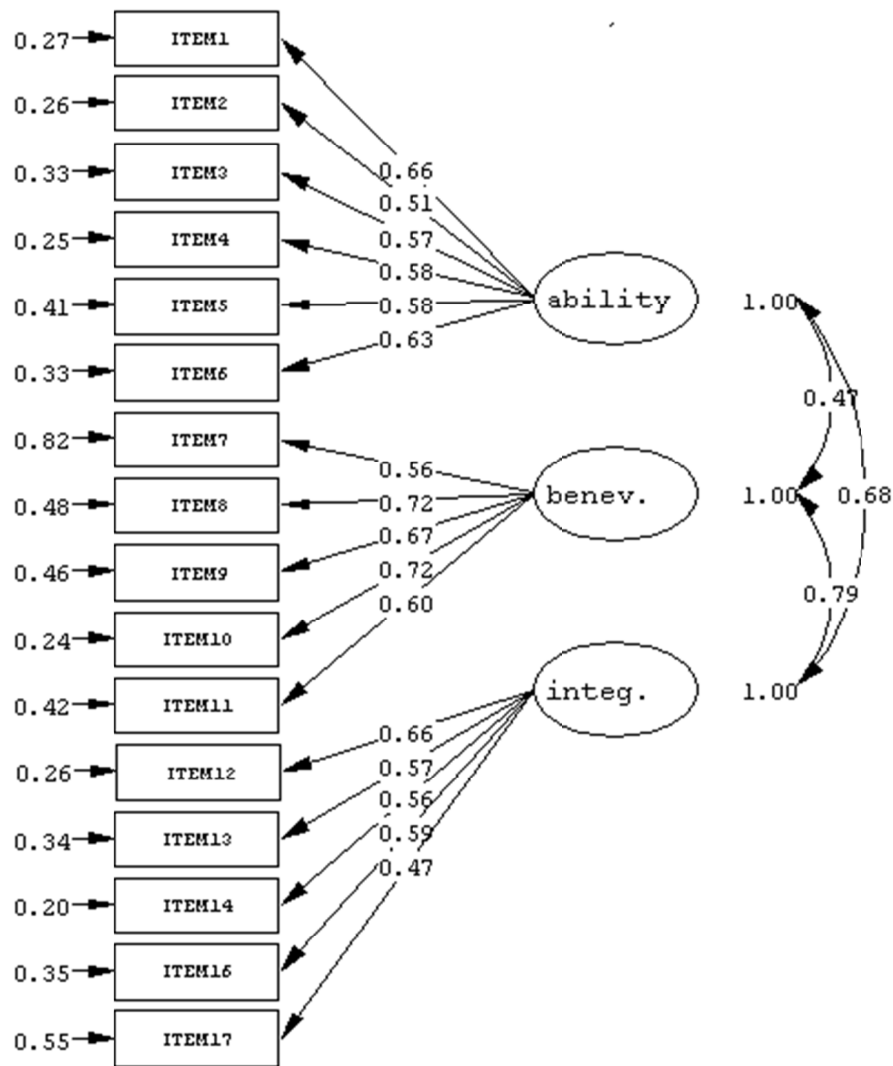


Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) diagram

2.2.2 Beliefs about Discipline Inventory

There are three subscales named relationship-listening, confronting-contracting, and rules and consequences in beliefs about discipline inventory developed by Glickman and Tamashiro (cited by Wolfgang & Glickman, 1986). In this inventory there are 12 statements that include two different choices one of which the participants are expected to choose, and these statements represent one of three discipline models: (1) relationship-listening; (2) confronting-contracting; and (3) rules and consequences. There are four items and eight responses under each subscale. Thus, respondents' scores on each subscale range from zero to eight. A score of zero on any subscale indicates that the participant does not prefer that discipline model for any of the items. On the other hand, a score of eight indicates that the participant prefers that discipline model for every item.

The validity and reliability of the beliefs about discipline inventory was formerly tested by various researchers. Glickman and Tamashiro (1980) gathered the data from 124 teachers for the validity and reliability tests. According to their findings, the item discrimination ranged from 29% to 71% which was an indicator of good item discrimination. Teachers, curriculum experts, and education academicians evaluated the items for the content validity (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1980). Recently, Polat, Kaya, and Akdağ (2013) were found Cronbach's Alpha values as 0.73 for relationship-listening subscale, 0.76 for confronting-contracting subscale, and 0.86 for rules and consequences subscale with Turkish sample. In this study, Cronbach's Alpha values were found 0.75, 0.78, and 0.82, respectively.

2.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics for the trust scale, the subscale scores of integrity, benevolence, ability, relationship-listening, confronting-contracting, rules and consequences were reported. Correlation test was conducted to examine the relationship between teachers' trust in their students and their classroom discipline beliefs.

3. Results

Mean scores of teachers' trust in students and their scores of classroom discipline models are shown in Table 1. According to the results, it was found that teachers' trust in students was at the moderate level ($M=3.22$; $sd=0.54$). Also mean scores of subscales of trust instrument were at the moderate level. Mean scores of subscales were found as ($M=3.09$; $sd=0.62$) for integrity subscale, ($M=3.39$; $sd=0.72$) for benevolence subscale, and ($M=3.18$; $sd=0.62$) for ability subscale.

Table 1. Mean scores of teachers' trust in students and classroom discipline models ($n=255$)

Trust scale	M	sd	Discipline inventory	M	sd
Trust	3.22	0.54	Relationship-listening	4.13	1.28
Integrity	3.09	0.62	Confronting-contracting	5.33	1.37
Benevolence	3.39	0.72	Rules and consequences	2.54	1.34
Ability	3.18	0.62			

Depending on the analysis results of beliefs about discipline inventory, it was found that teachers' mean scores of confronting-contracting model ($M=5.33$; $sd=1.37$), and their mean scores of relationship-listening model ($M=4.13$; $sd=1.28$) were at the moderate level. However, teachers' mean scores of rules and consequences model were at the low level ($M=2.54$; $sd=1.34$). Descriptive statistics showed that teachers preferred confronting-contracting discipline model most. This model followed by relationship-listening discipline model, and teachers preferred rules and consequences discipline model least.

Correlation analysis was made for examining the relationship between teachers' trust in students and their classroom discipline model preferences. Analysis results are given in Table 2. In terms of correlation coefficients, the value between 0-0.3 indicates low, 0.31-0.70 indicates moderate, and 0.71-1.00 indicates high relationships (Büyüköztürk, 2015). According to analysis results, there was a moderate, negative and significant relationship between scores of rules and consequences model and trust ($r=-0.431$, $p=0.01$). Nevertheless, there was a low, positive and significant relationship between scores of confronting-contracting model and trust ($r=0.220$, $p=0.01$). As similar, there was a low, positive and significant relationship between scores of relationship-listening model and trust ($r=0.215$, $p=0.01$). There was a moderate, negative and significant relationship between scores of rules and consequences model and scores of integrity subscale ($r=-0.384$, $p=0.01$), scores of benevolence subscale ($r=-0.371$, $p=0.01$), and scores of ability subscale ($r=-0.324$, $p=0.01$). On the other hand, there was a low, positive and significant relationship between scores of confronting-contracting model and scores of integrity subscale ($r=0.166$, $p=0.01$), scores of benevolence subscale ($r=0.218$, $p=0.01$), and scores of ability subscale ($r=0.163$, $p=0.01$). Similarly, there was a low, positive and significant relationship between scores of relationship-listening model and scores of integrity subscale ($r=0.223$, $p=0.01$), scores of benevolence subscale ($r=0.155$, $p=0.05$), and scores of ability subscale ($r=0.165$, $p=0.01$).

Table 2. Relationship between teachers' trust in students and classroom discipline beliefs ($n=255$)

		Relationship-listening	Confronting-contracting	Rules and consequences
TRUST	r	0.215**	0.220**	-0.431**
Integrity	r	0.223**	0.166**	-0.384**
Benevolence	r	0.155*	0.218**	-0.371**
Ability	r	0.165**	0.163**	-0.324**

** $p=0.01$, * $p=0.05$.

4. Discussion

The results showed that teachers' trust in their students were at the moderate level. This result is similar to Cerit's (2009) and Özer, Demirtaş, Üstüner, and Cömert's (2006) studies. Cerit (2009) mentioned that teachers' trust in their students were at the moderate level, and Özer et al. (2006) revealed that teachers' trust in their organizations were at the moderate level, too. These findings are considerable, because trust is an important factor for student achievement and trust-based school climates can catalyze student success (Raider-Roth, 2005; Goddard et al., 2001).

The analysis of discipline scores revealed that teachers preferred confronting-contracting discipline model most, and rules and consequences discipline model least. This finding is similar to Polat et al.'s (2013) study, but different than Witcher and colleagues (2008) study. They reported that their pre-service teacher sample most preferred rules and consequences discipline model, followed by confronting-contracting discipline model, and their sample least preferred relationship-listening discipline model. Both this study and Polat et al.'s (2013) study conducted in Turkey, but Witcher and colleagues (2008) conducted their study in the USA. Thus, the reason of this difference may be cultural based.

The results of this study showed that there was a moderate, negative relationship between teachers' scores of rules and consequences discipline model and their trust in students; and there was a moderate, negative relationship between teachers' scores of rules and consequences discipline model and their scores of integrity, benevolence, and ability subscales. This finding can be interpreted as when teachers' trust in students increase, their scores of rules and consequences discipline model decrease; and when teachers' trust in students decrease, their scores of rules and consequences discipline model increase. Individuals who trust people more control them less, and individuals who trust people less control them more (Vosselman & Meer-Kooistra, 2009). Also, when the trust level between educators and learners decrease, educators tend to use more power (Oosthuizen et al., 2003). Teachers who adopt rules and consequences discipline model argue that rules and consequences are determined by teachers, and control of classroom activities belong to the teachers (Wolfgang, 1999, 2001). Furthermore, these teachers reinforce the notion of the teacher as an authority figure (Govender & Sookrajh, 2014). In this sense, teachers who tend to control more tend to trust in their students less.

The results revealed that there was a low, positive relationship between teachers' scores of confronting-contracting discipline model and their trust in students. Likewise, there was a low, significant relationship between teachers' scores of confronting-contracting discipline model and their scores of subscales of trust instrument. This finding can be interpreted as when teachers' trust in students increase, their scores of confronting-contracting discipline model increase; when teachers' trust in students decrease, their scores of confronting-contracting discipline model decrease, too. Teachers who prefer confronting-contracting discipline model use control less when compared to teachers who prefer rules and consequences discipline model (Wolfgang, 1999, 2001). Thus, it can be suggested that teachers who adopt confronting-contracting discipline model trust their students more when compared to teachers who prefer rules and consequences discipline model.

According to the results, there was a low, positive relationship between teachers' scores of relationship-listening discipline model and their trust in students. Besides, there was a low, significant relationship between teachers' scores of relationship-listening discipline model and their scores of subscales of trust instrument. This finding can be interpreted as when teachers' trust in students increase, their scores of relationship-listening discipline model increase; when teachers' trust in students decrease, their scores of relationship-listening discipline model decrease, as well. Relationship-listening discipline model proposes using power and control at a minimum level by teachers (Wolfgang, 1999, 2001). Using power and control at minimum level can be interpreted as there is a trust based positive climate (Oosthuizen et al., 2003). Hence, it can be suggested that teachers who prefer relationship-listening discipline model control their students less, and trust in their students more.

This study is not without limitations. The study is limited with the views of the teachers who work at lower secondary schools in Kocaeli, Turkey. Similar studies can be conducted with the teachers who work at various geographical regions and/or various levels of education. In addition to these, the results of this study include the limitations of correlational analysis. No causal inferences can be made with the results of this study.

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